This restaurant's wooden palace-resort look is Malay-inspired

By Tessa R. Salazar

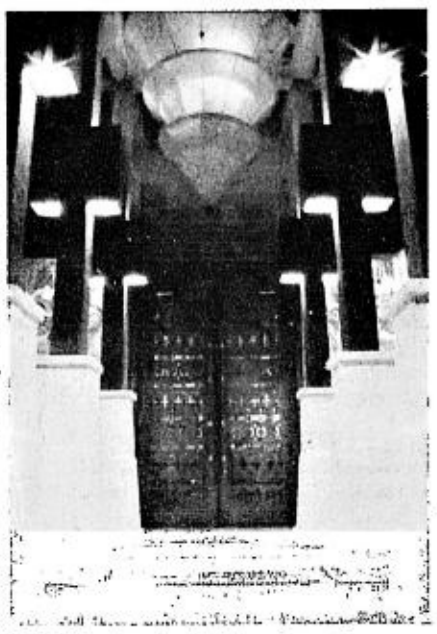
THE ELEVATED entrance looks like the wooden Sanctuary of Truth castle in Pattaya, Thailand. But while the castle in Pattaya is adorned with carvings and sculptures of celestial bodies and supernatural characters of Oriental origins, this one boasts of lithe Malay female statues in a perpetual welcoming gesture to passersby and its dwellers.

On the porch, regal poles give an illusion that we have just stepped inside a palace, into an ancient skyscraper fit for kings.

Wall panels adorned with leaf carvings stand bound the main entrance hall that gives the structure an Asian feel.

SCULPTED Malay woman

NOT an art museum but a Malaysian designer's interpretation of Malay women's life



REGAL poles give illusion of a castle.

Creating ripples

What we had just seen, surprisingly, is not a tourist structure, nor is this a locale in Malaysia. On the contrary, this may be just within your friendly neighborhood—in Alabang near its commercial hub Town Center. The place is called Banana Leaf Curry House, and its presence is creating ripples among the public, and drawing impromptu snapshots (from cameras and camera-phones) among customers and passersby.

The Banana Leaf Curry House in Alabang is distinct from its other branches in Greenbelt (Makati) and Podium (Ortigas) because it is the only one that is Malay- and tropical Asian-inspired, with even the touch a resort.

One of the first things a visitor would probably do before asking the menu is take a deep, deep breath. The open space is a towering 12 meters high (39 feet)—all the way up to its tropical-inspired palm leaf ceiling (*banig* in the vernacular).

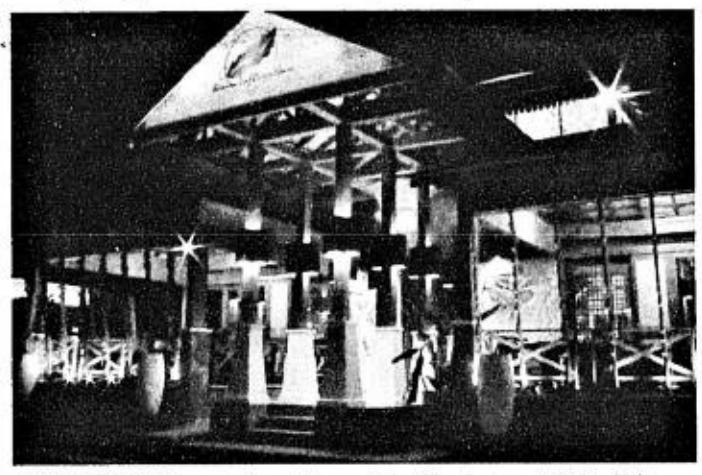
The designers could have easily been tempted to build a mezzanine to exploit this vertical space, and thus add more customers to the 150-seat capacity. But they have chosen to create an ambiance of a high ceiling that brings a comfort level comparable to a resort.

Maximum use of daylight

The whole 425 sq m structure is surrounded not by closed walls that would drive away claustrophobes but by glass walls and wood maximizing the use of daylight. The use of wood and glass has also produced the desired environmental effects, with some portions of the ceiling taking in natural light.

Apart from the maximum use of daylight—which gives the place a higher potential for conserving energy—the restaurant is enhanced by esthetics at minimum cost. Though, admittedly, much of the materials are imported, designers stress they are cost-efficient in the long run.

The roofing, meanwhile, uses asphalt shingles instead of the original cogon grass, which could have been perfect for a truly native-inspired structure and are approved by the fire department and the city hall. The owner, however, didn't want to raise concerns about the roof's safety during fireworks displays, especially during New Year's revelries. Thus, the asphalt shingles had to do.



THE LIGHTING comes into play at night. Pendant and Malay light boxes create the after-dark ambiance.

A large amount of wood is used in the interior. Tanguile wood was used because it's the most widely available. The wooden eaves are carried throughout the outlet screens. The timber trellis is fitted with screens to create an effect on the incoming sunlight.

Costing P20M

The construction cost was about P20 million, modest compared to the other branches in Greenbelt and at The Podium in Mandaluyong City.

The Banana Leaf in Alabang is seen as a step in evolution for the owners. The original designs (in Greenbelt and The Podium) were more straightforward and "part of a shell." The Banana Leaf in Alabang, according to its designers, was conceptualized and built from scratch, but which actually cost slightly less.

The first two branches were made by local designers who had their own interpretations of what a Malay design would look like. The two branches were also meant to have that tropical look. The Alabang branch made use of Malaysian designers for that completely authentic interpretation.

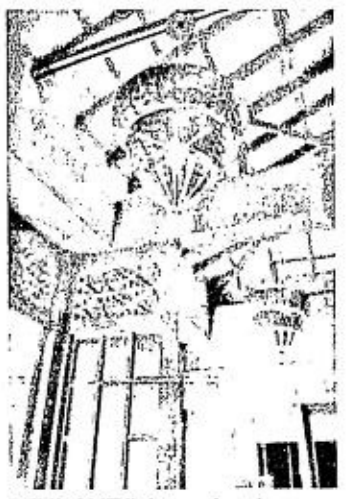
"Here, we really came up with a less is more approach. You're surrounded with different elements but we didn't overspend on these elements. It's not cluttered," said Wilson Chu Jr., president of Banana Leaf Curry house.

He added: "We wanted to create an impact right away. Instead of hiring a local designer to come up with something Malaysian, because we serve primarily Malaysian cuisine as well, we went to Malaysia and sought the assistance of a Malaysian design team to come up with this concept."

The center of the ceiling carries the designer's interpretation using floating hibiscus flowers, the national flower of Malaysia. Something else is also different about the establishment. There's one central dining area supported by two compartments on the top and on the front. The roof has three levels—two on the side and one on the top.

"It would've been easier to come up with one floor level, and that's it. But we wanted to emphasize an experience for people who dine in with us here," said Chu.

THE HIBISCUSES are like floating flowers at the top. Customers think they're umbrellas.



PENDANT lights and antique glass

Playing with light

The Banana Leaf is something to behold even at night, with Malay light boxes and pendant lights surrounding it. Chu likened the play of lights to the indirect lighting of a Balinese resort.

The light blends come into play when the sun sets. Chu said his team wants people to be able to eat well and not get sleepy afterward.

The colorful murals at the VIP areas are in stark contrast to the dominant brown of the whole interior. The VIP areas depict Malay faces and village life. So do the sandstone statuettes as well as the walls.

Part of the best ambiance is actually inside the washroom. This place is not covered with tiles, but still part of the "naturescape" decorated with stones and pebbles and narra lamps, to make the restroom experience a truly Banana Leaf Alabang experience.

And not only are the designers and the materials imported, but so are all the chefs, who come directly from Malaysia, Nepal and India (northern and southern). "We serve Southeast Asian food, so we might as well serve it the right way," said Chu.

Banana Leaf is a franchise from Hong Kong. Chu and his siblings had their first encounter with Banana Leaf in Hong Kong when they were still young. "We kept coming back for more after that." It proved that their experience with Banana Leaf was that good they brought it here in the Philippines.

Ayala Greenfield Estates: A community to be proud of

PRIME subdivision Ayala Greenfield Estates holds occasional open house events, allowing guests and homeowners to sample the winning features and new privileges that the exclusive development has in store for them.

Every event allows participants to mingle across the site's winsome facilities, but it's mostly during lunch time that they congregate inside one venue and enjoy a satisfying meal together. It's the perfect chance for them to unwind and get to know one another.

Knowing the value of food

Alexander Lim knows the value of great food and togetherness. As official caterer and concessionaire of Ayala Greenfield Estates, Lim and his family business are dedicated to giving the best service and the most sumptuous of food regardless of cuisine or occasion.

The high standards of Phoebe's Café are applied, and participants of these events appreciate this attention to dining satisfaction manifold.

Unanimous decision

Originally hailing from Calamba, Laguna, has given them a familiarity with the Ayala Land project early on, and it was a unanimous decision for him, his wife and three kids to move on to a nearby but totally different living environment.

In these early stages of Ayala Greenfield Estates, he was also given the opportunity to be its exclusive caterer for various upcoming functions.

Breathtaking views

The Lims have been happily residing at the subdivision since December of last year. Alexander reveals that he instantly liked the place because of its breathtaking, nature-centric views.

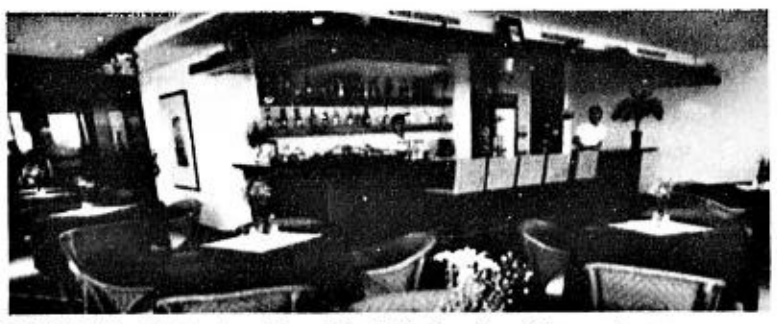
"When you come from Manila, or any other busy city, this is heaven. There's no pollution. It's quiet, and you have peace of mind regarding security. You have no fear of any untoward incidents. My family is safe here," shares Alexander.

He is particularly happy that the development had its own golf course, an exclusive Ayala Greenfield Estates feature that his son is enthusiastically looking forward to upon the completion of the front nine holes by the year's end. Alexander appreciates this and the subdivision's conduciveness for both indoor and outdoor activities for the entire family: "You don't have to go out looking for rest or recreation. It's all here; if you just want to relax or swim, you can do it. But if we do go out to the Alabang Town Center, it's only a short drive from here."

Good feedback

He also finds it convenient that all his family's other needs are attended to nicely. "Ayala Land is very professional. I also have a lot of good feedback from friends about Ayala Greenfield Estates. You have no problems with water, or any other services, unlike other subdivisions. I can see that they're strict with construction requirements, but when you look at the other side, it's to our advantage," he enthuses.

Alexander adds that other developments have no set guidelines, which leads to the construction of houses that lack esthetic sense or symmetry, and other questionable infrastructures. "Other subdivisions have factories, warehouses and other factors that ruin the value of your house. Here, everything looks great and overall values pick up nicely. Maintenance is a priority, and you can be proud that you belong to a very good community."



THE LIM family's business Phoebe's Café offers fine dining and cozy ambiance—a formula they bring to Ayala Greenfield Estates as the official caterer during different functions.

FROM LEFT are Ramon Aldaba; EVP Reynaldo Villar; Cheryl Arnold, AVP for marketing; president Alfred V. Ty; SVP and comptroller Jocy Kho; Zenia Sy, AVP for sales; and engineer Jose Talusan Jr., FVP for property planning and development.

Federal Land turns over Oriental Gardens units to owners

NOT RAIN nor wind could dampen the high spirits of the proud owners of units at the Orchid tower of Oriental Gardens Makati during its recent topping-off ceremonies and "Welcome Home" party for all unit owners. The event included the formal key acceptance by the unit owners from Federal Land's first vice president for marketing Ramon H. Aldaba.

A total of 160 units were turned over way ahead of the expected December schedule. That's five months earlier for the homeowners to move in and begin enjoying their new homes. Many are already in the furnishing stages by the respective owners and their own interior decorators of choice.

Real setting

Some of the owners were pleasantly surprised to see the offerings in the project literatures were metamorphosed to real setting—with luxurious appointments, specially the leisure areas where the moongate garden is located by off the swimming pool, the full-service gym and the outdoor Thai-inspired gazebo on the podium level.

This early, owners who seem to instantly take some liking for their new neighbors are talking of community activities such as holding of Sunday Masses at the podium area and possible cook-outs in the spacious landscaped garden areas.

Cozy gazebo

Young couples were particularly eyeing the cozy gazebo that became even more romantic with the lights dimmed by the mist of rain.

What perked the atmosphere even more were last minute reservations for still available choice units, made frenzied by talks between brokers and their clients who were vying for the few remaining units particularly those overlooking the sunset view of the west.

Last minute buyers include a penthouse unit owner who have just flown in from California, and executives in overseas postings but who would still want a place of their own here in their home country.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

LIFESTYLE

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Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

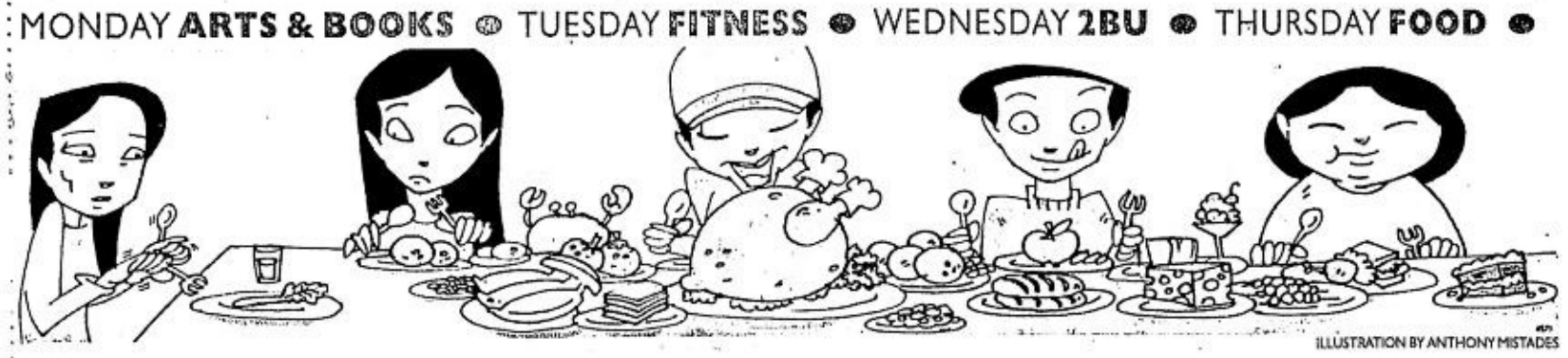
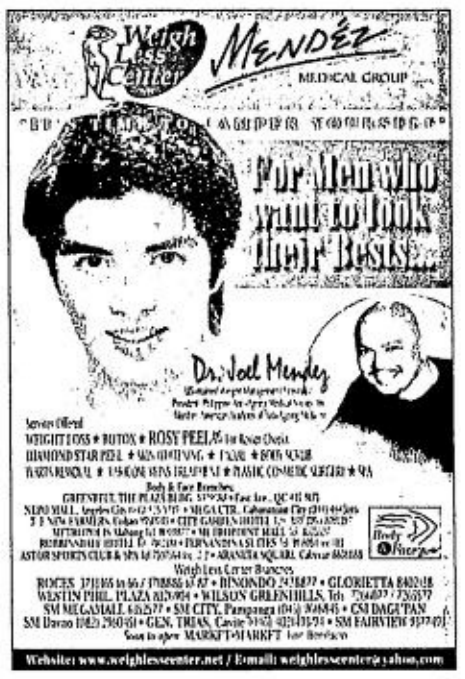


ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY MISTADES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What's eating you?

LAST week, I met two ladies who told me about their friend who wouldn't eat anything unless he knew how many calories the food contained, who did not trust his own mother's cooking, who rarely ate out because he had no control over the food, and who spent Sunday afternoons planning his next week's menu down to the last calorie.

The friend could have been simply very particular about his nutrition, but then again, he could have an eating dysfunction.

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

Although I have written about eating dysfunction before, it seems a good idea to revisit the issue because many people don't realize that rigid and inflexible behavior could lead to an eating disorder.

Dysfunctional eating covers a range of behavior, from healthy habits to a full-blown disorder like bulimia or anorexia. If people are not aware of their dysfunctional eating behavior and do not try to change, their habits can be brought to the extreme.

Signs of dysfunction

Nutritionists at the University of Arizona developed the "Eating Issues and Body Image Continuum" to help people determine if they have a dysfunctional eating pattern. Not everyone fits neatly into one category. Most people have habits that characterize different categories.

The following version was adapted from the original by nutritionist Sheri Barke of the University of California, L.A. She says the goal is to be in the "concerned in a healthy way" category.

Food is not an issue:

- I am not concerned about what or how much I eat.
- I feel no guilt or shame no matter what I eat or how much I eat.
- Exercise is not really important to me.
- I choose food based on cost, taste and convenience, with little regard to health.
- My eating is very sporadic and irregular. I don't worry about meals; I just eat whatever I can, whenever I can.
- I enjoy stuffing my face with lots of tasty food at restaurants, holiday meals and social events.

Concerned in a healthy way:

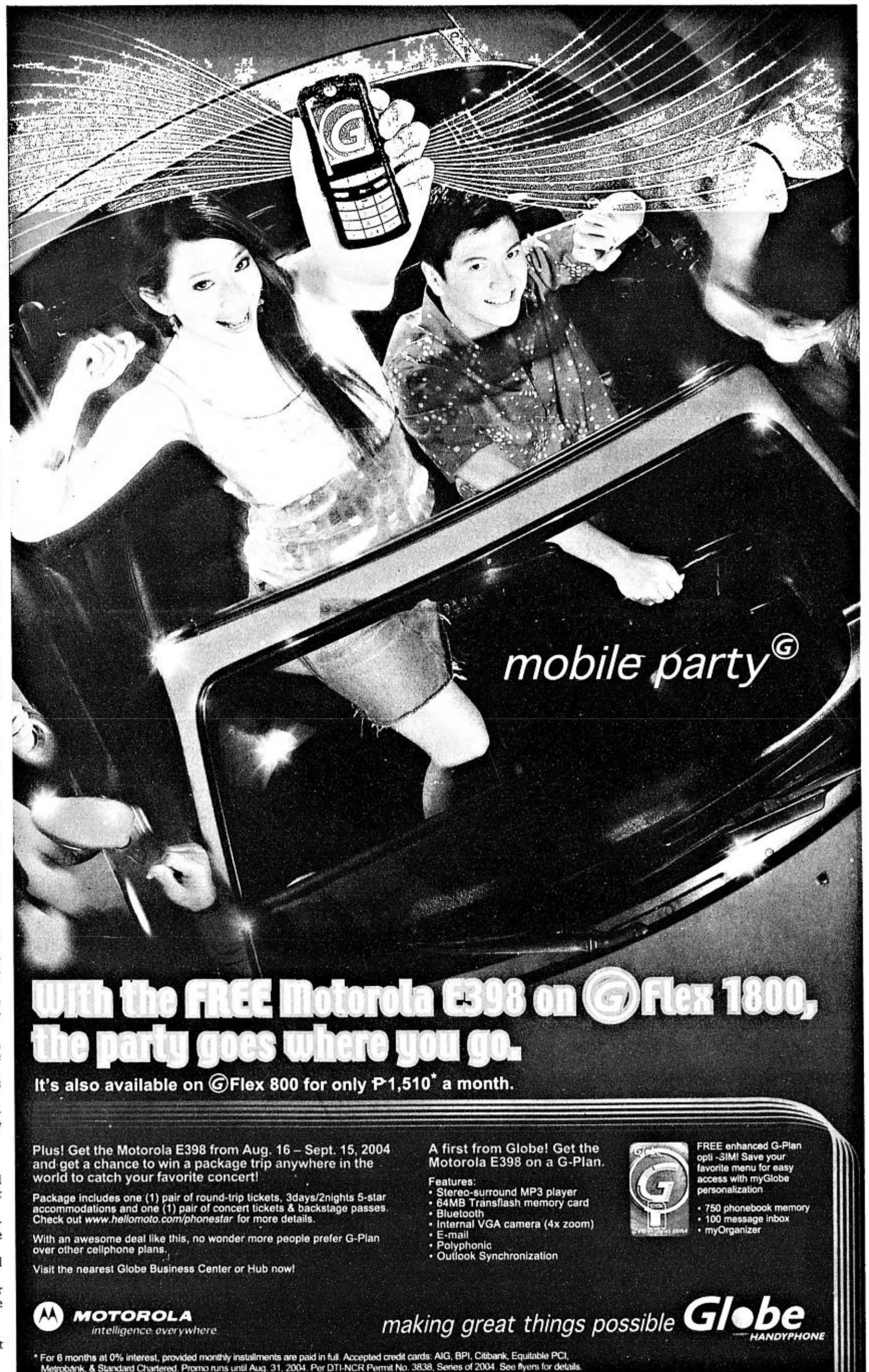
- I pay attention to what I eat to maintain a healthy body.
- Food and exercise are important in my life, but they only occupy a small part of my time.
- I enjoy eating, but I balance my pleasure with eating with my concern for a healthy body.
- I usually eat three balanced meals daily, plus snacks, to fuel my body with adequate energy.
- I am moderate and flexible in my goals for eating well and being physically active.
- Sometimes I eat more (or less) than I really need, but most of the time I listen to my body.

Obsessed/preoccupied:

- I think about food a lot.
- I'm obsessed with reading books and magazines about dieting, fitness and weight control.
- I sometimes miss school, work and social events because of my diet or exercise schedule.
- I divide food into two categories—good and bad.
- I feel guilty when I eat "bad" foods or when I eat more than what I feel I should be eating.
- I am afraid of getting fat.
- I wish I could change how much I want to eat and what I am hungry for.

Disruptive eating:

- My food and exercise concerns are starting to interfere with my school, work and social life.
- I use food to comfort myself.
- I have tried diet pills, laxatives, vomiting or extra time exercising to lose or maintain my weight.
- If I cannot exercise to burn off calories, I panic.
- I feel strong when I can restrict how much I eat.
- I feel out of control when I eat more than I want to.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HAVING a great time: (standing) My pal, Donnie Ramirez; *moi*; our super hosts, Speaker Joe de Venecia and wife Gina; Nestor Cuartero, Dee Siytangco and everyone's *palangga*, Rey Vergara; (seated) Chai Santiago, Tony Lopez and Mina Paras

GANG of three: The De Venecias' super secret weapons are the dedicated and *tres charmants* Joe and Gina de V. followers: Mari Dee Chanyungco, vivacious Conchita Razon Tabuena and eyecatching Southern beauty Lucel Villanueva

Cooking up a world-class party

WALLACE Business Forum president Peter Wallace takes a call on his Sony Ericsson P900, while Optel Limited managing director Donald Felbaum checks his own unit.

"SAY cheese!" and they did. Angie Stone, Bev Cook and Renata Bedwell

EAGER to experience the magic and adventure of Harry Potter are Pan Pacific's Caroline Maala, NW-ITI GM Gina Campos, Saretta Morales and kids

ME Magazine top editor Cathy Guballa (center) is welcomed by Northwest Airlines' Marica Cabrera-Castillo and hip and smart corporate salesperson Michelle Concepcion-Reyes

HARRY Potter fans: Pat Alberto of Ark Travel and Lucille Chabeldin of Thomas Cook

THE GUYS from Bigfish, hotshots **Domini Primero** and **DJ TC**, cooked up another delicious bash of wild music, fun and excitement, Godskitchen's cool Global Dance 2004 at the jumping NBC Tent.

The super dance event was graced by the likes of Prague-bound couple **Thomas Elspersman** and fianceé **Elaine Matawaran**; Addict mobile endorsers, Super's **Tim Yap, Borgy Manotoc** and good-looker **Derek Ramsey**; Bigfish's first ladies, eye-catchers **Josa Primero** and **Pixie Cheah**, with hot partychicks **Ana Cruz, Tintin Magsaysay** and **Bea Locsin**; exceptional, inimitable in-demand interior designer **Anton Mendoza**; and *moi*.

The dance floor was packed like a can of sardines, *palanggas*, with rocking party animals and pals such as beautiful couple **Richie Lavarro** and gorgeous wife **Faith**, and good-looking, suave babe hunter **Marcel Crespo**, with **John Osmeña Jr.** World's number 27 DJ, trance-master **John "00" Fleming**, took 4,000—yes, *palanggas*, 4,000—strong personas on an ecstatic musical journey filled with lush sounds and hypnotic beats.

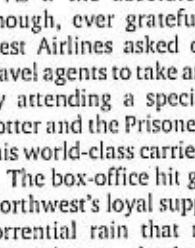
Godskitchen Int'l tour manager, the renowned **Paul Hugo**, said it was a "feat in world-class production. Godskitchen@Bigfish is another achievement in the Philippine dance/clubbing scene."

The colossal happening got rolling, thanks to Addict Mobile, with Smart Buddy, Preview Magazine, Lemon, MTV, Y-style, Joey 92.3, Stagecraft and Jujubeats.

Hungry for more, *dahlings*? Then catch **Hed Kandi** in Manila on Sept. 18 at the NBC Tent. But where else, *n'est-ce pas*?

As expected, *palanggas*, Godskitchen@Bigfish world-class partying zoomed up 10 notches higher!

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH



Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** on **Kodak Max**

Grand time guaranteed

When you get an invite to whatever occasion at the sprawling Dasmariñas Village home of brilliant Speaker **Jose de Venecia** and his wife, charity-oriented and woman of substance **Gina Vera Perez de V.**, you can bet your last peso that you are going to have a grand time, *palanggas*. The De Venecias are renowned for the super yummy food and great company.

Their regular get-together with some of cosmo *Manille's* prominent newspaper and magazine writers are always gastronomic and fun events that I can't afford to miss. On top of it all, the raffles and games are super and the prizes fantastic.

In the recent event, vibrant **Sandy Siytangco**, my *palangga* **Deedee's** super *charmante* daughter, was in charge of the hilarious games.

The indefatigable Gina, wearing a chic powder blue pants suit was, as usual, her gracious self, the consummate and thoughtful hostess that we all know and love. She was always making sure we all enjoyed ourselves, which we did. Although she had to leave early to join GMA in Pangasinan, the fun lunch affair ran smoothly.

Speaker Joe de V. took over and joined us for lunch, answering a million and one questions on what's going on at the House of Representatives.

The Speaker was definitely in good spirits, though fighting a nasty cold. Someone told me, "Must have been the glad tidings and heartfelt commendations from President GMA herself at the fellowship dinner held at the Manila Polo Club, hosted by Representative **Mikey Arroyo**." Well, *dahlings*, we all know what happened after that, don't we?

The parlor games concocted by Sandy S. were hilarious, with all of us fighting, and even cheating, to be winner, all in good fun, natch!

The excellently prepared food had my all-time favorites in the De Venecia home, like the to-die-for *pancit*, with only oysters and Rigadellas mixed with a bit of oyster sauce as seasoning; and their unparalleled chicken *adobo* and *laing*. They made me forget I only wanted a very, very light lunch, *palanggas*.

Making the occasion even more memorable were the dozens of superb *bangus* from our hosts' fish-farm in Dagupan, jars of *bagoong* and *achara*, and *longganisa Kapampangan*-style, that we brought home.

It's no wonder that Joe de V. was overwhelmingly elected Speaker for the fourth time. His wife Gina is definitely the woman of grace and beauty behind the throne. Charm and know-how keep this couple dear to our hearts.

Magical flight

As if the absolutely fun cruise was not enough, ever grateful VIPersonas of Northwest Airlines asked over 500 of their loyal travel agents to take an exciting magical flight by attending a special screening of "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban" hosted by this world-class carrier, *palanggas*.

The box-office hit generated frenzy among Northwest's loyal supporters, who braved the torrential rain that night. At the Premiere THX Cinema, the invitees, some with their kids in tow, queued for yummy hotdogs, barbecues, cheese, salsa-smothered nachos and the must-have, freshly-popped buttered popcorn, natch!

The event, organized by the dynamic sales and marketing team of Northwest Airlines ITI, "one of Asia's most outstanding," celebrated the launch of Northwest's "daily nonstop service" from *Manille* (via Tokyo) to Portland, Oregon. The service allows faster, more convenient connections from Portland to 30 US destinations served by Northwest and its partner airlines, said NW's top secret weapon.

Après the screening, *palanggas*, the bespectacled wizard waved his magic wand allowing several Potter fans to go home with premium Northwest items. Circulating endlessly among the invitees were Northwest Airlines hot shots, ITI's **Fina Campos** and **Mark Abastillas**, plus NW's **Adin Gonzales, Nilo Rodriguez** and **Amy Meris**.

ALL together now: INQUIRER's twosome—*moi* with brilliant Bel Cunanan; JDV; lady with a basket, Lydia Castillo; Aida Sevilla Mendoza and vivaciously fun Nelly Sindayen; (standing) Star's Domini Torrevillas, Ellen Tordesillas, Bulletin's Dee Siytangco, top business columnist Boo Chanco, our hostess Gina de Venecia, super food columnist Chona Trinidad, Star's Lifestyle editor Millet Mananquil and George Vail Kabrisante

Smart crowd

COSMO Manille's heavyweights in business mingled with the hottest social movers and shakers to chill out and toast the good life. The happening showcased the *chi-chi* Smart Infinity; Sony Ericsson's latest baby, the K700i; Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp.'s Mabuhay Miles Gold Visa; and BMW's classy 645Ci Coupe.

Well, *palanggas*, Sony Ericsson's K700i was particularly well-received, blending style and function. Users can store up to 584 images, or up to 45 minutes of video, with greater clarity. The phone has a Photo Light and 4x digital zoom, plus a display with 65,536 colors. With all its functions, we could have documented the event with the K700i!

The Sony Ericsson rah! rah! team was led by GM **Dennis Manzano**, marketing manager **Patrick Larraga** and account manager **Clariza Chia**.

Checking out the product were Roche Pharmaceuticals GM **Warrik S. Bedwell** and his wife, **Renata**; Insular Savings Bank president and CEO **Susan R. Figueras**; Felican Brokerage president **Fred Figueras**; Philippine Airlines VP **Felix J. Cruz**; Optimum Media Phils.' head **Resti Reyes**; Microwarehouse president **Cynthia Veloria** and VP-Marketing **Eric Sulit**; young Alliance Media Printing president and southern gent **Dennis O. Valdes**; and Wallace Business Forum president **Peter Wallace**, who discussed the functionality of his Sony Ericsson P900 with Optel Limited managing director **Donald R. Felbaum**.

It seemed that the invitees were just like their network provider—Smart enough to see a fine deal, *di bala*?

RED GALS: The magic circle of cool Northwest Airlines-ITI top lady Gina Campos (fourth from left) comprises Asia's best sales and marketing team. Maja Viloria, Marica Cabrera-Castillo, Anna Samonte, Melissa Divinagracia, Monique Severa, Ysabelle Bernardino, Dorothy Neri and Ava Topacio

Banish rainy-day blues

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

WHEN the weather keeps you indoor, there is no need to panic. You can do the many things you may have left undone all this time.

Keeping busy can be more meaningful if you have your well-being in mind. With so much time in your hands, seize the opportunity to deal with the essentials.

ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY MISTADES

Your mind

Get unstressed. Pick up that inspirational book you've set aside and promised to finish months ago. This is the time.

Slow days are for winding down, not for getting all wound up. Practice breathing in a relaxed manner. People prone to panic attacks or burdened with issues can now sit quietly and reflect on their emotional triggers.

Ask yourself: "What ails me?" Have a journal for writing down your insights. Slow breathing helps calm the mind and the heart. Try five counts inhale, three counts hold, five counts exhale for seven minutes.

Affirm good thoughts, past or present, then project them into the future. Declare: "It is done."

Practice smiling. See how radiant you are and so much more beautiful when you smile. Stop being a grouch (if you have that tendency). Ban frowning today. Remember, there are fewer wrinkles on a smiling face!

Sing a favorite tune. Who cares if your singing is not good enough for others to hear? Singing can be energizing.

Do something challenging. Complete the day's crossword puzzle. Make your calls. Numbers of people in your to-call list must not remain un-dialed. Perhaps you can call a long-missed relative or friend. That should warm their hearts and yours.

Write an old-fashioned letter. Don't e-mail it. Write it by hand then send by post. You can imagine the surprise on the face of a loved one upon receiving your letter.

The spirit

Meditate for 15 minutes when you wake up and before bedtime. If you have not meditated before, a little music can help you achieve your relaxed level. Play a light classical piece or a compact disc of nature sounds.

Simply close your eyes and just let go of your thoughts, feelings and cares. Turn off your inner chatter. Tune in to the silence.

Focus on the real music of nature—the wind blowing, rain pouring, birds chirping, seeking shelter in trees... Listen with the ears of your soul.

Pray with joy, not with pain; with gratitude, not grief. Be one with God.

Start a fund/clothes drive for calamity victims. Work with your barangay or parish. Go on a friendly neighborhood campaign to collect used clothes, etc. You will find that doing good for someone in need can be healing.

Join a soup kitchen and volunteer your time and resources. You will find that civic work can be so gratifying. Those seeking to validate their self-worth should try charity.

The body

Exercise. If you have stairs (at home or office), remove your shoes then climb one flight of stairs and down repeatedly until you sweat. Stop after 10 minutes. Take a two-minute water break. Repeat.

Or use two steps as your aerobic steps. Climb up and down for 10-20 minutes. Rest for two minutes, then walk briskly around the house for another five minutes.

Exfoliate by using a gentle scrub. Use raw oatmeal and milk for the face and body. Or simply run a loofah all over your body mixed with gentle virgin coco oil.

Start minimizing whites from your diet today (white rice, white bread, white pasta). Slow but sure is best. Gradually cut back on starchy foods and replace them with multigrain pasta/bread and red rice to feel more energized.

Go to the kitchen and prepare a salad.

Salad A:

Romaine lettuce (cut into 3-inch pieces)
Ponkan orange slices
Fresh almonds
Tomatoes, sliced (optional)
Dressing: soy mayonnaise, 1 tsp fresh honey, 1 tsp mustard

Salad B:

Soak a batch of spinach leaves in boiling water for 10 seconds. Drain. Sauté in extra virgin olive oil for 15 seconds. Salt lightly. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese.

(For a mayo substitute, try Healthy Options at Rustan's Shangri-La Mall or Back to Basics store at Robinsons Galleria in Ortigas.)

For relaxing teas—mood enhancers, all chamomile, peppermint, St. John's Wort.

Soak in a bath. Fill half your bath tub with hot (bearable) water. Float the leftover orange slices from your salad. Squeeze half a lemon into the tub (pits removed). Throw in the lemon peeling. Add 1 tbsp of virgin coco oil. Turn off the lights and all electronic devices. No worries. You are now in suspended animation. Feel pampered. Light up your aromatherapy lamp with your personal choice of oils.

Take a glass of red wine and live longer. One glass, which you can sip slowly for 20 minutes, may be enough to relax you. Step into the tub and sip your wine slowly during the last five minutes of your home spa ritual.

Love and light!

Watch "Life" by Cory Quirino, 11:30 p.m., Wednesdays, Studio 23

Listen to "Ma-beauty Po Naman," 6-7 p.m., Sundays, Radyo Patrol, dzMM 630.

The awesome power of affirmation

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

Positive auto suggestions can help tremendously in the alleviation of 21st-century illnesses

WE can define an "affirmation" as a positive verbal expression or assertion of a mental conviction. An affirmation is essentially the same as "auto suggestion." An affirmation is a verbal suggestion to ourselves that something is true.

Examples of affirmations are: "I am going to pass the bar exams," or "I have strong leg muscles," or "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

That our mind exerts a very strong power or influence on our body is well established, yet it is not given much importance by the orthodox or allopathic system of medicine. Other methods of healing recognize the awesome power of the mind over the body.

Consider the following documented case reported by Emile Coue in the 19th century: "A French professor suffered a severe attack of asthma while spending the night in an unfamiliar hotel. Knowing that his only hope of receiving breath was to find a source of fresh air, he staggered out of bed and groped his way to what he supposed to be a window. He searched in vain for the window catch and, not finding it, broke the glass in desperation. After standing there a few moments and gulping the air, his asthma symptoms subsided and he was able to return to bed. He passed the rest of the night at ease. The following morning he discovered that he had broken the glass front of an old grandfather clock."

Powerful system of healing

Coue, who recorded the above incident, was a French pharmacist and healer who developed a powerful system of healing based on auto suggestion or mental affirmation.

He studied the hypnotic practices of Dr. A Liebeault of Nancy and concluded that the curing powers of hypnosis "lay not in the hypnotist but in the patient." The hypnotist's presence would not be necessary if the patient's power to cure himself could be triggered or induced.

He found such a system in auto suggestion. He instructed his patients, no matter what ailment they had, to repeat a positive phrase over and over again, and observed the results.

He experimented with various phrases, but the most famous was: "Every day in every way I am getting better and better." It worked like magic.

A charlatan?

However, orthodox doctors considered Coue a charlatan, despite the fact that many patients got healed after visiting his clinic. So the physicians sent spies to Coue's clinic to find out what he was doing that made patients well. Asthma, skin diseases, paralysis and even appendicitis responded positively to Coue's unorthodox treatment.

The treatment that Coue developed was not merely positive thinking, but really a way of encouraging the will to order the body to be healthy. Human beings, he found, "are capable of being cured by almost anything, provided they believe it will cure them."

A true story

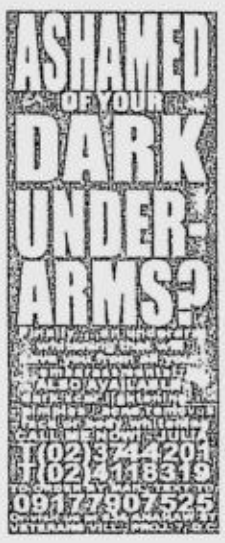
Take the following true story, which is found in some medical books:

A man with several malignant tumors went to his doctor. The doctor told him there was a new powerful drug that had just been out in the market (I forgot the name of the drug). The doctor gave the patient an injection of the new drug, and pretty soon his tumors disappeared. Some weeks later, newspapers reported that the new drug administered to the patient was found ineffective and useless. After reading that, the man's tumors reappeared. He went back to his doctor who, upon seeing the patient's terminal condition, could only give him a placebo while telling him it was a new drug from Germany. The patient agreed to try it and his tumors again disappeared like magic.

Today, medical science has definitely established the close links between the nervous system, emotions and the immune system. How we think and feel can affect the course of an illness. Numerous examples have been recorded of cancer cells developing after a person has had an emotional trauma, such as loss of a loved one or marriage breakup or a big quarrel with someone close.

Positive mental affirmations, such as the one developed by Coue in the 19th century, can help tremendously in the alleviation of 21st-century illnesses.

Those interested in attending my ESP and Inner Mind Development seminars may call 8107245 or 8926806 for details.



What's eating you?

From page D1

Disordered eating:

- I worry about what I will eat and/or when I will exercise all the time.
- I follow a very rigid eating plan and know precisely how many calories, fat grams and/or carbohydrates I eat every day.
- I feel incredible guilt, shame and anxiety when I break my diet.
- I regularly stuff myself and then vomit, exercise, or use laxatives to get rid of the food.
- My friends and family tell me I am too thin, but I feel fat.
- I am out of control when I eat.
- I am afraid to eat in front of others. I prefer to eat alone.

What to do if you are a dysfunctional eater

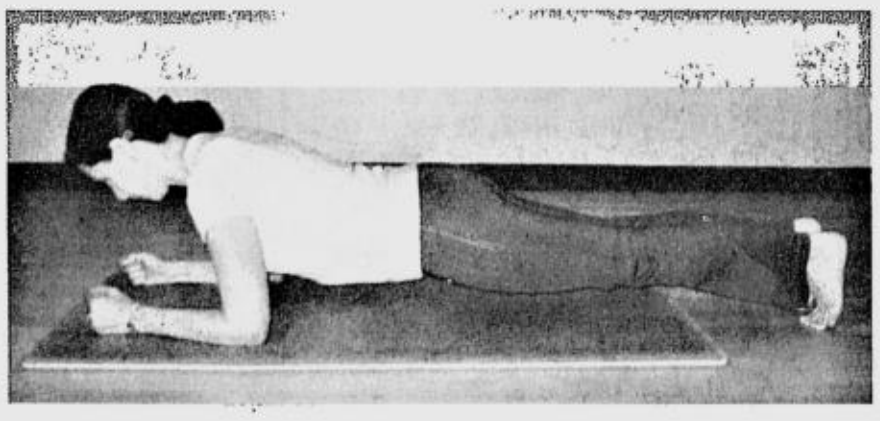
If you fit the category of dysfunctional eater, it is time to do something about it before it becomes a full-fledged disorder. The American Dietetic Association says there are two sets of issues and behaviors that have to be addressed: those directly relating to food, exercise and weight; and those involving your relationship with yourself and with others.

A nutritionist can help you with the first by teaching you the right way to eat and lose weight. But only a psychologist or psychiatrist can help you deal with the second.

Next week: Dysfunctional body image

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Low plank



THIS advance exercise strengthens the muscles of the trunk (abdominals and lower back), as well as the shoulders.

Equipment:

Exercise mat

Exercise technique:

1. Lie face down on a mat with arms bent and close by your side.
2. Lift your body by tightening your abdominal and lower back muscles.
3. Your weight will rest on your forearms and toes. Your face looks down at the floor.
4. Hold the position for as long as you can (15 to 30 seconds maximum).
5. Repeat three to five times.

Performance tips:

1. Modify the exercise by supporting your body weight on your knees rather than the toes.
2. Make sure your lower back doesn't sag.
3. Don't forget to breathe while holding the position.

MEDICard

Take Charge Doc!

Dr. Nicky S. Montoya

Take Charge Doc! is your weekly question and answer guide on general health issues and illnesses. MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. And in a common thrust with the campaigns of the government, Take Charge Doc! parallels its features on the Calendar of Health Events of the Department of Health.

Does taking large doses of anti-oxidants (like Vitamin E) help prevent lung cancer?

No. The ingestion of large doses of Vitamin E does not help prevent lung cancer. In fact, a clinical trial of vitamin E and beta-carotene (one of the most powerful of antioxidant nutrients and a precursor of Vitamin A) in male smokers showed that the latter even increased the mortality rate of smokers. On the other hand, Vitamin E was shown to decrease the incidence and death from prostate cancer. Vitamin E and beta-carotene did not show any effect on lung cancer incidence or overall mortality.

The best way to avoid lung cancer is to stop smoking, which has been known to account for about 90% of all lung cancer cases and to avoid exposure to second hand smoke, which has been shown to be one of the major causes of the disease.

This week's answer is courtesy of **Dr. Tommy U. Reyes**, our accredited Oncologist at the Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital (OLLH) in Sta. Mesa, Manila. Dr. Reyes joined MEDICard in 1999 but has been in practice of his profession for over 11 years now. He is a Medicine graduate of the University of Santo Tomas. In 1988, he took his residency training for a specialization in Internal Medicine followed by subspecialty residency in Oncology at the Philippine General Hospital. Dr. Reyes is a Fellow and Diplomate of the Philippine College of Physicians and the Philippine Society of Medical Oncology. For consultations, members may visit his clinic at OLLH, Room 429, Mondays to Fridays, from 9 AM to 12 noon.

BE HEARD AND BE READ. Write to DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA (c/o *TAKE CHARGE DOC!*) or e-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for inquiries on health matters.

Bee Yum Foods signs with MEDICard

BEE YUM FOODS CORP., operator of Maxim's Tea House, one of the pioneers of authentic Chinese restaurants in the Philippines, signed recently its corporate healthcare agreement with MEDICard. Gracing the contract signing ceremonies were MEDICard's (L-R) Luis Montoya (EVP & GM), Marcel Torres (Sr. Mngr.-Direct Sales) and Dr. Nicanor Montoya (Pres.) with Bee Yum Food's Jocelyn Poon (GM) and Jerry Gonzales (Operations Mngr.). Standing (L-R) are MEDICard Direct Sales Asst. Managers Jon De Quiros and Joan Sabater.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND

WHAT'D YOU GET FIRST PERIOD?
WORLD HISTORY.
HA. SUCKER.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?
HISTORY IS A TOTAL MOVIE AND SLIDE-SHOW CLASS. YOU WANT TO SAVE THOSE FOR LATER IN THE DAY WHEN YOU NEED A NAP.
RATS.
KIDS, WOULD YOU MIND DOING THAT OUT OF EARSHOT?
WE'RE TALKING ACADEMICS, MOM.
I HAVE FRENCH AFTER LUNCH. CAN'T I NAP THEN?

A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA

MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG

I'M VERY HAPPY BEING MARRIED AND A FATHER
...AND I KNOW A MINIVAN IS A VERY PRACTICAL FAMILY VEHICLE
8-31
...BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I DON'T STILL HAVE DAYS WHEN I FANTASIZE I'M DRIVING A TURBOCHARGED ROADSTER WITH THE TOP DOWN!

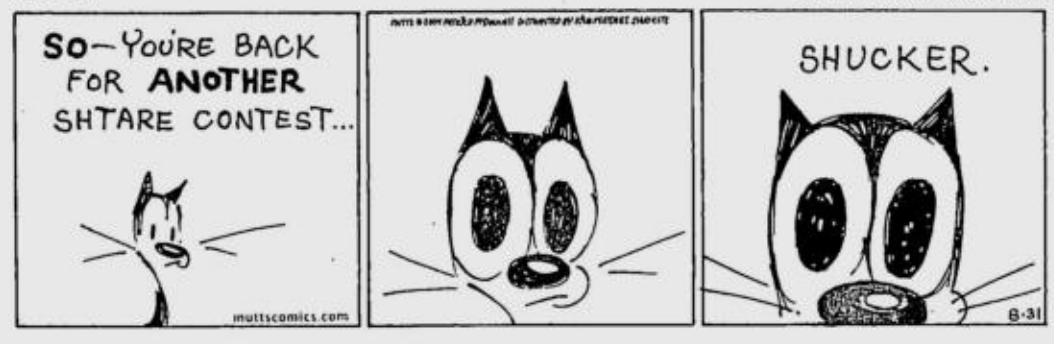
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR

SUBUKAN NGA NATIN ITONG MGA NASA LIBRO NI MANG DAGUL.
SAWA NA AKO SA GIN AT LUNCHEON MEAT...
ETO...
TUBA SA IDJUK AT PAUROY WITH KINILAW NA BUTUD SA PATIKAN...
DA USUAL, MAO.
LAGYAN MO NG SIBUYAS 'YUNG MA LING...

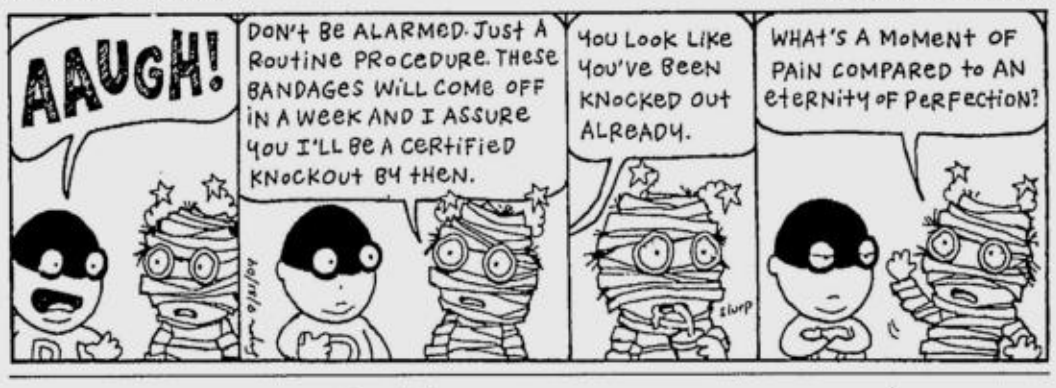
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

IT'S PIZZA DAY TODAY, ZOE, SO I'M GIVING YOU A $5 BILL.
OKAY.
NOW PUT IT IN A SAFE PLACE SO YOU WON'T LOSE IT!
DON'T WORRY, MOM!
90 SECONDS LATER...
WHERE DID YOU DECIDE TO PUT THE MONEY?
WHAT MONEY?

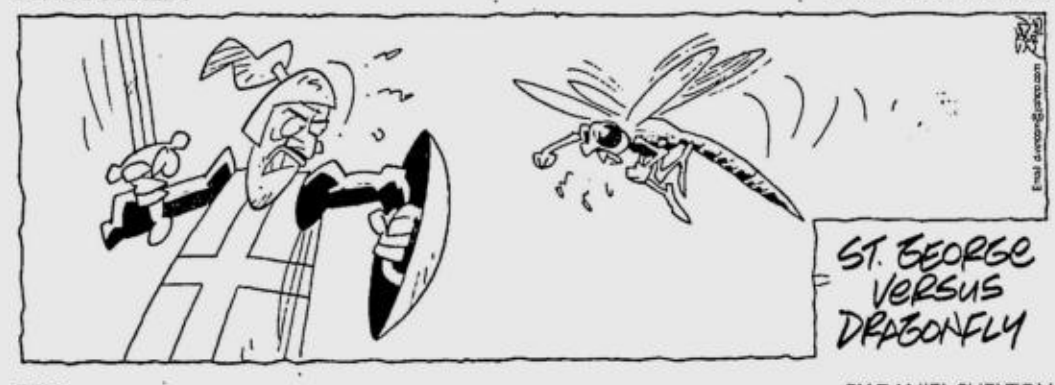
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL



ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


AAUGH!
DON't Be ALARMED. Just A Routine PROCEDURE. These BANDAGES WiLL COME OFF iN A WEEK AND I ASSURE YOU I'LL Be A CERTIFIED KNOCKOUT BY tHEN.
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'VE BEEN KNOCKED OUT ALREADY.
WHAT'S A MOMENT OF PAIN COMPARED to AN eTERNITY OF PERFECTION?

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS



HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're often in the public eye. You're popular, influential and self-motivated. You have a sincere desire to help others. This is because you are easily drawn into dramatic situations. Even though you are private, most people find you entertaining and witty. It's time to wrap up a major cycle in your life.
Birthdate of: Van Morrison, musician; Debbie Gibson, singer/actress; Richard Gere, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Relations with family members might be restrained today. On the other hand, you're absolutely ready to help anyone in the family, especially in a practical way.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Your relations with others, especially siblings, have a sober, serious quality today. Perhaps you're discussing sober, serious subjects. Somebody is giving somebody else good advice.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You're certainly not frivolous with your money . Quite the opposite—you're counting pennies. You want to see if you have enough to keep the wolf away from the door.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You feel restrained in expressing your affection for others today. This could alienate someone. You don't mean anything personal by it; you just feel a bit withdrawn right now.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You're quite content to be by yourself today or work alone on certain projects. In fact, solitude pleases you now. It gives you a chance to catch your breath.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Someone older or more experienced might give you good advice today. Alternatively, you might be the older, more experienced individual dispensing advice. Either way, it's a good thing.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Listen to what bosses, VIPs, parents and people in authority have to say today. You might not like it, but it's worth listening to—especially for you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Travel plans and matters connected with publishing and education are discouraging today. Perhaps the cost is more than you anticipated. Perhaps you cannot get needed approval. Have patience.

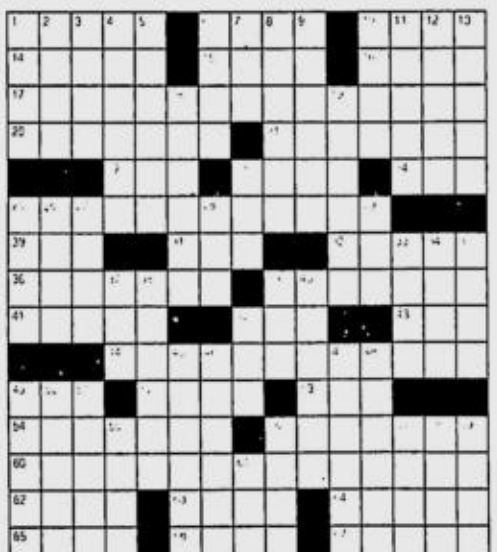
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Love relationships are definitely strained today. You don't want to spend time in a frivolous way. You're only going to devote energy to something important, long-lasting, grounded and real.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Because you feel a bit withdrawn today, a partner might feel put-off by your behavior. It's good to be aware of how you affect others. If you don't want to create this impression, you'll have to correct it somehow.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): If you can work alone at your job today, that's your best option. Fortunately, your powers of concentration are keen. You can accomplish a lot today.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You might feel lonesome today. "Nobody loves me." This is a passing dark cloud, and incidentally, many people feel this way today.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By John Underwood
New York, NY

8/31/04

ACROSS
1 Cycle starter
6 Flop
10 "...see how __ run"
14 Love Italian-style
15 "Dies __"
16 Welles role
17 Reading of Hamlet
20 Perfume ingredient
21 Under discussion
22 Math branch
23 Old Testament prophet
24 "I'm Dickens, __ Fenster"
25 Browser range
30 DDE
31 Tavern drink
32 Henry VIII's last name
36 Ms. Moses
39 Car color combo
41 Oregon capital
42 Jackie's second hubby
43 Buddhism branch
44 Smith/Kline movie
49 Craze
52 U follower?
53 Waikiki garland
54 1239-1307 English king
56 Prepare for war
60 Shirley Temple movie
62 French pronoun
63 Wrist-to-elbow bone
64 Believer in God
65 Rodent pests
66 NCO rank
67 Ocean raptors

DOWN
1 Bryn __ College
2 "Typee" sequel
3 Rocky crags
4 Crucible
5 Dealt in used goods
6 H.S. subj.
7 Hockey legend Bobby
8 "__ X"
9 Confer
10 Fight calls
11 Austere
12 Embody with
13 OKs
18 Native American dwelling
19 Not bamboozled by
23 Fruit drink
25 Hairpieces
26 Creole vegetable
27 Tangible
28 Dockers grp.
29 Except
33 Catnap
34 Persons
35 Tenancy cost
37 Original
38 Composer Shostakovich
39 Dent starter?
40 Wood for cricket bats
42 Grain beard
45 "The Bourne Identity" author
46 Boring tools
47 Scoff at
48 Frankfurter
49 Less
50 Ms. Rogers St. Johns
51 Resided
55 Bedazzles
56 Noteworthy act
57 Related (to)
58 Project vertically
59 Shea team
61 Gerundial ending

Monday's Puzzle Solved

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8/31/04

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

MUST BE HARD TO KEEP UP WITH YOUR GRANDSON!
OH, HE'S NOT MY GRANDSON -HE'S MY SON! I'M ACTUALLY ONLY THIRTY SEVEN YEARS OLD...
I ONLY LOOK LIKE THIS 'CAUSE I'VE BEEN LIVING CLOSE TO THAT FACTORY OVER THERE-
-TOXIC FUMES AND ALL ...
..SO...YOU'RE NEW IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD?

MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

TITA! AKO NALANG ANG TAGA-DILIG NG ORCHIDS NINYO.
SIGE, BUNSOY, PERO KAILANGAN, RESPONSABLE KA HA..
SIYEMPRE NAMAN PO..
..NUNG NAMATAY NGA YUNG MGA ORCHID NAMIN, AKO ANG RESPONSABLE E!

KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

KAMOTE!
MADALAS ITANONG SA AKIN KUNG SAWA NA 'KO SA PAGAGAMOTE SA EXAMS. HAH! KUNG ALAM LANG NILA ANG AKING NARARATING SA GANITONG STATE!...
BUKAS ANG ISIPAN. MADAMI 'KONG TIME MAG-REFLECT. MAS NAKIKILALA KO ANG AKING SARILI. GRABE,... PRICELESS, TSONG! HMOOH!...
SINUSUGO KO ANG KAPANGYARIHAN NG LANGIT! AKO'Y INYONG TULUNGAN!
...'TSAKA ANG BOTTOMLINE AY, MAS NAPAPALAPIT PA AKO SA DIYOS TUWING NANGANGAMOTE KO, hehe... KAYA AYUN... INEGIT NA LANG KAYO!
ASTEEG!
SIGE LANG.. SIGE LANG

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

ALE, ANGDAMI PO NYONG ANAK!! HINDI PO BA KAYO NAGPI-PILLS?
KATOLIKO PO AKO!! BAWAL POE!
E, 'YUNG CALENDAR METHOD, DI PO NYO GINAGAWA?
NAKU, mahi, SA HIRAP PO NG BUHAY...
KAHIT KALENDARO WALA KAMI!!

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (MT-3)
1.0
1.1
1.25
1.4
1.6
1.8
2.0
2.2
2.5
2.8
3.2
3.6
4.0
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END

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